

PUNCH

OR
THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CXCVI, No. 5,125

June 28 1939

Charivaria

A DRESS reformer boasts that he hasn't worn a collar for seventeen years. It seems his doctor advised him to avoid anything starchy.

"Gymnastics, Joiners and Fixers required."
Herts and Essex Observer.

Wouldn't Benders and Stretchers be better?

"Bandy legs indicate people of stubborn character," says a writer. They will wear shorts.

"FOREIGN OFFICE WILL BE TOLD OF NEW TENSION"
Daily Mail.

Perhaps we had better drop them a line ourselves to make sure.



"If HITLER would only tell the world what he really wants everyone would be happy," says a writer. Happy of course to have been included.

"I just laugh at the masses of forms that I have to fill in in connection with my farm," says a Norfolk farmer. He's simply asking to be charged entertainment tax.

"Where does Dr. GOEBBELS get the idea that Britain would like to march into Germany?" asks a correspondent. He may have been taking German propaganda seriously.

The next war, declares a scientist, will be fought with insects. This seems to undermine the belief that war is no picnic.



A taxi-driver, fined for obstruction, asked the magistrates to allow him a week in which to find the money. The trouble of course, as usual, was all those overcoats.

A correspondent says that a cigar consumed in the room where his goldfish are kept will make them ill. One would have thought the smoke would have cured them.

"Mr. Sagara noticed a little cubicle that was vacant. He sat at the table and studied the menu through spectacles and clenched teeth."

Daily Paper.

Always choose a vacant cubicle for this trick.

"Throughout the summer people continue to speculate on the ifs and might-have-beens of the preceding football season," says a sporting writer. There are still a lot of Wolverhampton wonderers.

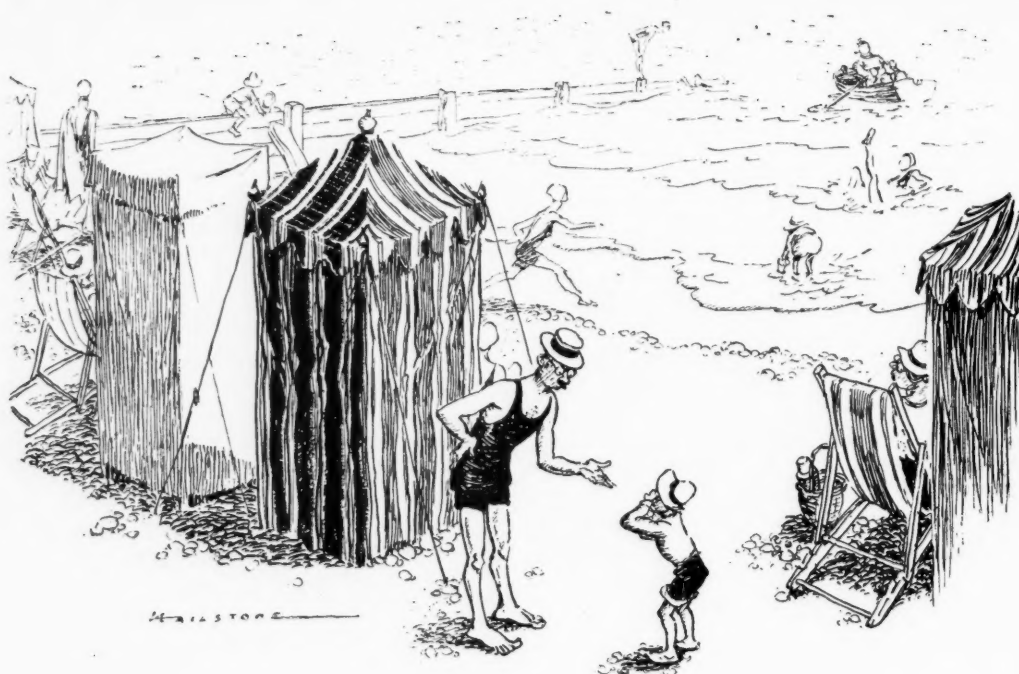


Faint Praise

"He had, said Lord Wark, most generously given them of his services since the beginning on an entirely voluntary basis. He was constantly there, his work was never done . . ."

Scots Paper.

According to an explorer there is a Central American forest in which the trees grow in pairs about six feet apart. His idea now is to return and try to interest the natives in hammocks.



"I trusted you, Stanley, and now I find you have betrayed my trust by losing your shrimping-net."

Investigations of Hector Tumbler

A Race Against Time

IN the early days of my acquaintance with Hector Tumbler there was one thing which often puzzled me. One would have thought that a detective of such unparalleled brilliance would have been positively overwhelmed by calls for help; that his doors would have been besieged day and night by a crowd of suitors. But this was far from being the case. As a matter of fact I can only remember one or two occasions when his help was actually requested by anyone. The truth was of course, as I discovered partly from my own observation but mainly from Tumbler's own hints, that the public had learned, through bitter experience, to respect his wish for privacy. Tumbler's services could not be bought. But if he was once interested in a case then nothing on earth could prevent him from investigating it. Often, it seemed to me, he did so almost against the wishes of the people concerned.

I was rather surprised, therefore,

calling upon Tumbler late one evening, to find him in earnest conversation with an elderly gentleman whom he had introduced as Mr. Ambrose Narwhal. He was a thin white-haired figure, and there was something about him, I could not tell what—his frock-coat and come-away collar perhaps, or his air of perfect discretion, or even the piles of brief-cases and law-reports on the floor about his chair—that suggested the old-fashioned family lawyer and the connoisseur of good wine.

It was in deference to Mr. Narwhal in this character, I supposed, that Tumbler presently produced a bottle of port labelled "Very Fine Old Ruby. Produce of Tierra del Fuego." When we had all three poured a glass of wine into the fire-place with due solemnity Tumbler cleared his throat, a smile playing about his knitted-silk tie, and said, evidently for my benefit, "The missing papers, then, Mr. Narwhal, are of great importance?"

The old lawyer leaned forward.

"I can't of course mention any names," he said in his grave high-pitched voice, "but I may say that if the contents of these papers were generally known the Duke of Micester would have to leave the country, the Government would go out of office, and every tramwayman in Leicester would be on strike to-morrow."

My mind was awl with excited conjectures. But Tumbler was speaking again.

"When you first missed these papers had anything out of the ordinary happened to arouse your suspicions?"

Mr. Narwhal shook his head. There was a long silence. Suddenly Tumbler clapped his hands to his forehead.

"For instance," he said, in that slow drawl which seemed to express all the tireless inertia of the man, "had you by any chance noticed any Chinese footballers loitering near your offices?"

The question made me start. Had I not known Tumbler so well I should

have thought he had taken leave of his senses. As it was, I thought he had gone mad.

"Chinese footballers?" said Mr. Narwhal. "No, certainly not." Then a light dawned in his face. "Why, yes, I remember now. Eleven Chinamen *did* visit me the very day the papers disappeared. They were dressed in football jerseys. They asked me to give them the papers. I refused of course. Dear me, the whole thing had quite gone out of my head."

We both stared at Tumbler in dumb admiration. The great detective's eyes had widened to pin-points.

"It's the No Tung gang," he muttered as though to himself. "For twenty years I've been trying to catch them. They pose as a football team—actually they are the cleverest gang of criminals in London. If we can lay hands on them, Mr. Narwhal, we shall have the missing papers."

Suddenly he rose to his feet.

"It's a race against time," he said, flinging his watch into the fire. Then, very quietly: "It's a case for the bloodhounds."

His words filled me with excitement. I had of course often heard of Bulger and Snorter, the famous animals which had helped Tumbler to bring so many criminals to book. Indeed their deep baying, proceeding from underground kennels, had mingled with the silver tones of Tumbler's trombone or with his own golden voice at many a midnight session in these very rooms. But I had never yet set eyes on them. In fact Tumbler had always been curiously evasive about them.

Without a word he led the way through a window and down a short flight of steps. In a second he had unlocked the kennel doors; in another second the two bloodhounds dashed out and with a concerted movement pinned Tumbler to the ground.

The great detective did not seem in the least discomposed by this display of animal sagacity. With some difficulty he rose to his feet and, requesting the loan of a brief-case from the old lawyer, he held it to the muzzle of each animal in turn to give them the scent. Quick as lightning they pinned the old lawyer to the ground.

It was an unfortunate beginning, I thought. Tumbler considered for a moment. Then making a sign for us to follow him he led the dogs back through the house and out into the deserted square. While we watched expectantly he slipped each dog off its leash. They sniffed about for some time, occasionally pinning one or other of us to the ground. Then, as though

suddenly coming to a decision, they walked away in opposite directions. I stared at Tumbler in mute inquiry. He nodded to himself.

"Yes," he said. "Clearly five of them have gone one way and six the other."

"Or four one way and seven the other," I ventured to suggest.

For a long time Tumbler went on muttering to himself. I caught the words "Nine one way and two the other, three one way and eight the other, ten one way and one the other." He got out his notebook and for some time was busy drawing complicated diagrams. Suddenly he shut up the book with a snap and led the way straight back to the house.

Eleven Chinamen, dressed in shorts and football jerseys, were kicking a football about the room with Oriental impassivity, uttering rhythmic cries. Tumbler darted forward. It was the work of a moment for him to secure the football and make up the struggling Chinese into a neat parcel with string and brown paper. In another moment he had seized a knife and slashed open the ball.

"Just as I thought," he said grimly, holding up the missing papers. His iron features relaxed into a smile of triumph.

But he spoke too soon. There was a sound of running feet, the door burst open, and Snorter and Bulger sprang into the room. With one perfectly-timed leap they pinned Tumbler to the ground. Another moment and they had swallowed the mysterious papers.

For a few minutes we watched in horror. Then, as the great detective was obviously deep in thought and showed no sign of moving, we decided to take our leave.

Recumbency

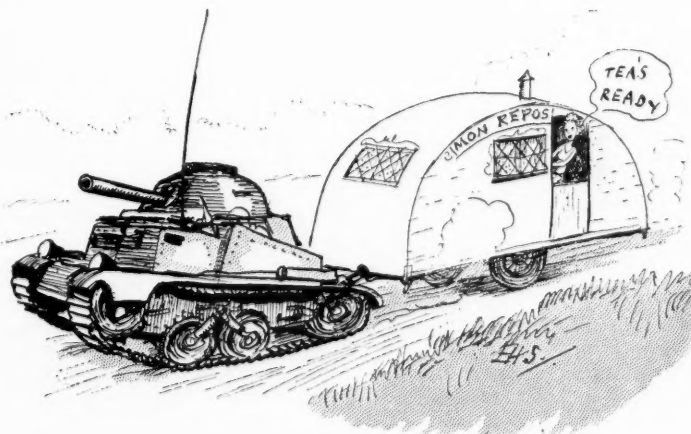
NEXT time
I look up into a lime,
Up into the bright
Limelight,
Or the luminous,
Later leguminous,
Bloom
Of the broom,
Or the leaves
Like shimmering sleeves
On each
Pale arm of the beech,
Or the cuffs
And clean green ruffs
That encircle the pink-and-white sea
Of faces that float in the chestnut-tree;
Next time I lie
With sorrel and sun in my eye,
Subsiding beside the smell
Of a bowed bluebell
Among mazes
Of bored bull-daisies,
And vistas of kidney vetch
At a stretch,
If it's hilly,
And armies of Stinking Willie,
And a striking view
Of yesterday's dew
And of buttercups blazing unchecked
That my chins reflect;
Next time I flop
Down into the high hay-crop,
I must remember to docket
The number of coins in my trouser-pocket.

o o

Gently Does It.

"OUR DEBT TO GREECE AND ROME"
Originally 7/6
NOW 2/6"

Notice in Oxford Bookshop.



To Serve in November

A T stubble ploughing
by and by
older men
than you and I
will work the wolds
and fen this year:
for we young lads
will not be here.

We'll march about
the barrack square
while they are marching
with the mare
at harrowing
or drilling wheat
down seed-rows that
give way to feet.

But our new jobs
with guns and tanks
and forming threes
among the ranks
won't hurt our souls
if we are willing—
though we'll be doing
different drilling.

Ay, we shall not
miss all the fun
because we've got to
use a gun.
We'll still have sweethearts,
manly fights
and song and beer
to pass the nights.

When it has blown
and snowed and rained
for half a year,
and we are trained,
we'll come back here
with minds made sure—
we'll know the future
is secure.

Though we'll have missed
two seasons' toil
about the yards
and on the soil,
if fighting comes—
and maybe pain—
we'll soon be back
at work again.

o o

Is Britain Ready?

SIR KINGSLEY WOOD received me in his plainly-furnished study and motioned me to an arm-chair. "Fire away," he said gaily. "Tell me, Sir Kingsley," I began. "This scheme for sending wireless programmes into every home along the telephone wires—I see it stated that ordinary conversations

on the telephone will not be interfered with. Now what the readers of my paper want to know, the question to which the British public demands an answer, is this: Will it be possible to make a private call while a programme is coming through? No, no, Sir Kingsley"—for I saw that he was about to interrupt me—"I am no fool. I quite understand that the wireless programmes will not come out of the mouthpiece of the instrument. But what I mean to say is, you surely can't have a Bach Fugue and an arrangement to play golf at half-past two coming along the same wire at the same time without some kind of confusion? Because if so, then I say frankly that the readers of my paper will give up the attempt to understand the principles of electro-telegraphy and retire into isolation."

Sir Kingsley here interposed the remark that he was no longer Postmaster-General and was not therefore in a position to make a statement.

"The fault is mine," I said generously. "At my age one tends to live too much in the past. The question, then, which I shall put to you is: What arrangements are being made for the boiling of milk supplied to children under the age of two in the areas scheduled for the reception of evacuees? Public opinion in this country is seriously concerned with the apparent lack of any Government plan to deal with this vital problem. The menace of unboiled milk—"

At this point I understood Sir Kingsley to say that all questions relating to the Government Evacuation Scheme should be addressed to the Ministry of Health, with which he had not for some time been connected.

"The facts are undoubtedly as you put them, Sir Kingsley," I replied, with some annoyance. "It is therefore in your present capacity as Minister for Air that I venture to approach you with a request for information about the strength of the Royal Air Force. I may say at once that any advances you may report in the output of machines and material will not give satisfaction to the readers of my paper. In view of the fact that figures of the German Air Force are not available, the provision of two thousand seven hundred and fifty first-line aircraft by March 1940 is clearly inadequate. My paper, which will never be a party to any attempt to conceal the true state of affairs from its readers, has week by week made it plain that whatever the strength of the R.A.F., that of the German Air Force is at least double, and will in the course of the next few months be at least four times as great. In view of the deadly peril which these figures disclose it is all the more surprising to read that you yourself, Sir Kingsley, a few days ago fired off some three hundred rounds from a new type of machine-gun. The public consciousness has been filled with misgiving by this incident. Surely, it is asked, if it was necessary to fire off these three hundred rounds, some junior official or, better still, a serving officer could have been found to discharge the task, thus leaving the Air Minister free to concentrate on the more pressing and vital problems of his department? The Man in the Street, who has thrown himself with splendid patriotism into the task of defending his home against incendiary bombs and gladly gives up one evening a week to a First-Aid lecture, has a right to ask what is being done for his security by the high-ups in Government offices, and he is far from being convinced that the firing of three hundred rounds of ammunition, however accurately, represents an achievement commensurable with the gravity of the danger which threatens this country. A census of stoves and gas-rings—"

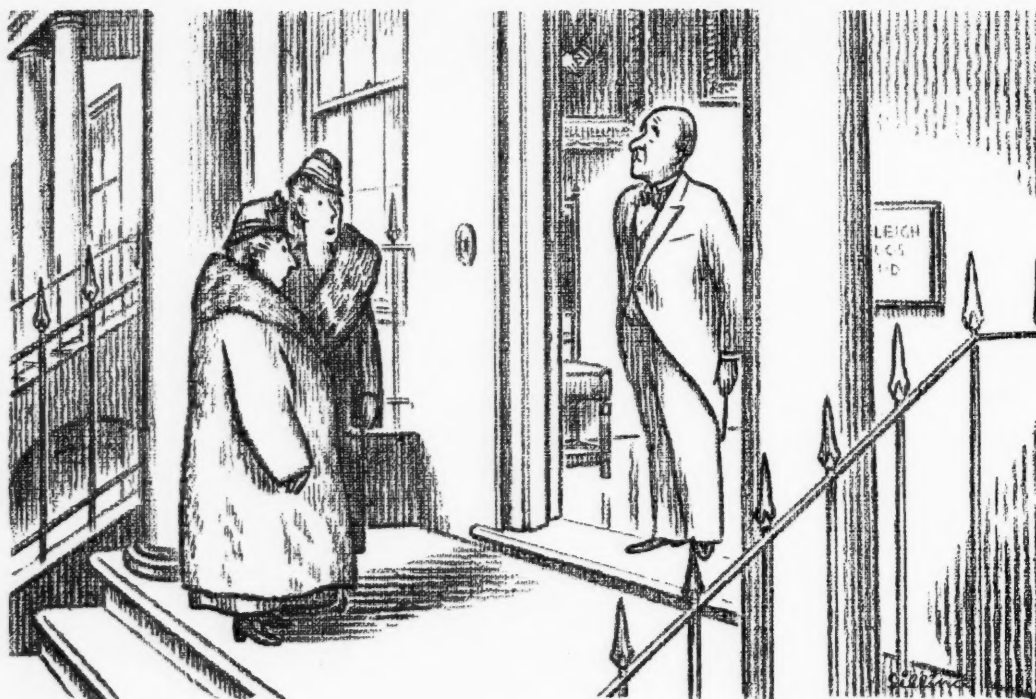
Sir Kingsley held up a warning finger. "I think your mind is wandering," he said genially.

"Thank you," I said. "The problem of providing



MORE, PLEASE !

Sgt. Anderson. "Join up, join up; this is just as important as 1914."



"Sir Charles is attending a very important appendix, Madam."

boiled milk for these thousands of young children is not one which admits of any delay. But I quite understand that under our present rigid departmental system it would not be proper for you to advance any opinion. I must therefore ask you to state categorically whether it is the official view that Great Britain is now secure from the danger of defeat by a knock-out blow in the early stages of a European War."

Sir Kingsley Wood pressed the tips of his fingers together judiciously. "The Government does not believe," he said, "that any foreign country would wish deliberately to challenge the armed might—"

"You can skip that," I said.

"—of this country, but if any did so, and I repeat—"

"Look here," I said. "Have we got ten thousand aeroplanes?"

"It is not now the policy of the Government to disclose the depth of our reserves, but I am happy to be able to say—"

"Have we got five thousand?"

"—happy, I say, to be able to say, that if and when any aggressor is mad enough to take the risk—"

"Two thousand?"

"—of pitting himself against the combined strength, financial, moral and material, of the British Empire, he will find that as ever the British people will answer the challenge with resolute and not ill-equipped defiance."

"About this boiled milk," I said.

"Oh, get out," said Sir Kingsley.

I left with the conviction that the introduction of telephonic radio programmes will be a boon to every householder.

H. F. E.

Still Closed

LOW by the water stands my wattle hut
And low beside the river lies my true love, but
Yellow shines the notice, "Wandsworth Bridge is
shut";

How shall we cross the river?

I love my true love and my true love loves me;
Her turtle-dove came flying and lighted on my knee
Carrying a message, "Oh, come speedily!"

How shall we cross the river?

I sent the dove flying with a message to the Mayor,
Saying, "Call the Borough Council and tell them my
despair."

He called the Borough Council; there was no comfort
there.

How shall we cross the river?

A thousand cars driving, as gleaming as they're made,
The pride of England's youth and the blood of England's
trade,

Jammed in droves at Wandsworth, mightily betrayed;

How shall we cross the river?

Crying of the children whose fathers can't return,
Bafflement of firemen who watch the buildings burn,
And low lies my true love among the lily-fern—

How shall we cross the river?

T. B.

Another Dawn in Hospital

THE car hit the lamp-post," said my poor friend Poker—"or rather a bollard or pawn-like object which had been thoughtfully placed in front of the lamp-post—at about 1 A.M. No, no revelry. The House had sat till 12.30, and my driver and I were still discussing Clause 3 of Something-or-other when the taxi crossed our bows.

"By the time the old nose had been stitched up by an admirable doctor, tetanus averted, and this and that, the face disinfected by an admirable orderly, the clothes inventoried, the address and full particulars recorded, and the body trundled into bed, it must have been about 3 A.M.

"At 4.45 we were still awake. The birds were hard at it, and the birds of West London, bless them, can make as grand a din as the country creatures on a fine spring morning. Accustomed to shipwrecks, we were somewhat shocked by our first motor-wreck, and Clause 3 was still charging about in the excited cranium. The long ward was full of men, all selfishly asleep and nearly all proclaiming the fact in the usual fashion. What a job, by the way, to be a night-nurse in a ward full of men! The many hardships of that noble profession have been frequently discussed, but we never heard any reference to the massed shores of men.

"Well, we said to a nice Sister: 'Sister, can we have an aspirin, please?'"

"She said, 'No. You have had an injection. You should have been asleep long ago.'

"We said, 'We are sorry, but we are not.'

"She said, 'Anyhow, in a quarter of an hour we start work' (or words to that effect).

"We reflected a little sadly on this information. Many years ago, when we discarded our appendix, we wrote an article called 'The Wash,' or 'Dawn in Hospital,' recording genially that just when the Abdominal in Number One had sunk at last into refreshing slumber he was always woken up and brutally washed.

"We wondered curiously why. We are still wondering. Doctors wrote to us, we remember, and said that we had done good. They said that these premature ablutions were often deleterious. They said that in their hospitals they would have the Wash

postponed. We were pleased with ourselves.

"But in those days, we recalled, we were washed at 7 for 7.30. Though in some places, as sweet Sister used to tell us, the Wash was as early as 6.

"6! And here, after all these years—after all our labours—in 1939—the hour was 5. *The world had gone back.*

"We pondered sadly.

"Sure enough, about 5 A.M. the long ward began to wake into activity, bustle and talk. They did not actually wash us, as we were new and mercifully not incapable; but they gave us a basin and sponge to play with, and we made a fair show.

"Meanwhile it became evident—and audible—that nearly everyone else in the long ward was the victim of motor-transport too. Few of them had escaped as lightly as we had; but all were convalescent, cheerful and reminiscent. By half-past-five A.M. there was a hubbub like the House of Commons at Question-Time, or the 'Black Lion' on Saturday night.

"And the one theme of conversation was motor-smashes, which did not at the moment commend itself to us.

"The man in the next bed was shouting cheerily across the ward:

"YES, HE WENT OVER THE HANDLEBARS. I SAW HIM. A LORRY CAUGHT HIM BEHIND, AND OVER THE HANDLEBARS HE WENT. RIGHT OVER THE HANDLEBARS. WHAT A MESS!"



"COR!" replied with relish the invalid some seven beds away. 'It WAS A MOTOR-BUS, MINE. A NUMBER EIGHT. COPPED IT PROPER, WE DID, ON ACCOUNT OF AN OLD TROUT POPPING OFF THE PAVEMENT WITHOUT SO MUCH AS OPENING HER ONLY EYE.'

"They brought us a nice cup of tea. The conversation swelled and continued:

"THE MOTOR-BIKE TURNED HEAD OVER HEELS, YOU SEE. NO, NOT US, THE MOTOR-BIKE. NEVER SEE ANYTHING TO BEAT IT. WE WAS IN THE DITCH, YOU SEE. BERT WENT OVER THE HEDGE AND I WAS UNDER THE CAR. TWO HOURS IT TOOK 'EM TO SHIFT ME TOO. BUT THERE, WE MUSTN'T GRUMBLE.'

"They took our temperatures.

"YOU'RE RIGHT," yelled another sufferer. 'IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORSE, I ALWAYS SAY. MY MATE SKIDDED INTO A PRIVATE CAR AND I WAS THROWN OFF UNDER A BEER-HORSE. YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT I'D HAVE COPPED IT WORSE THAN WHAT I DID.'

"YOU'RE RIGHT. WELL, NO MORE THRILLS FOR ME, THANKS!"

"I'VE HAD ENOUGH TOO. WE WAS A SHOP-WINDOW CASE.'

"GO ON! HOW MANY BONES BROKE?"

"JUST A FEW.'

"They brought us some excellent bacon and eggs, and comparative quiet descended.

"And the odd thing was that by about 8.30 or 9 absolute peace prevailed, and it seemed to us, peering about, that most of the exhausted patients had gone to sleep again.

"They took us below and X-rayed us.

"A charming chaplain came to see us.

"About 10.30 a delightful doctor came to see us. We were released and permitted to dress and to go away. We are very far from having any complaints. Indeed we are grateful, both for our good fortune and the very good care of that fine hospital. No doubt there is some good explanation. But we still wonder, curiously but respectfully, *exactly* why sick people have to be wakened and washed so very much earlier than the healthy.

"Nevertheless, it may have good effects. For, as we left, new life seemed to be stirring again, and we heard a voice say cheerily:

"OVER THE HANDLEBARS HE WENT. WHAT A MESS!" A. P. H.

At the Pictures

ESPRIT DE CORPS

It seems odd—I was about to write—that nobody before *Stagecoach* (Director: JOHN FORD) should have thought of applying what I may call the “people-thrown-together” idea to the past rather than the present. I was about to write that, and of course I have now written it; but I imagine that some correspondent is already putting pen to paper to tell me that it has been done. Never so well, I insist; for *Stagecoach* is extraordinarily good. I read two laudatory notices before I saw it and I was all ready to disagree with them, but I don't. This picture, with no big names (except the director's) and a collection of what may not unfairly be called stock characters, is raised by direction, acting, camera-work and sheer atmosphere into the top class.

The period is 1885 and the story is simple enough: basically it deals with a coach-full of people travelling from one frontier settlement to another across wild country in which the Indians have risen. The characters too have been chosen with that eye for an easy contrast and that liking for the obvious point that always seem to influence the choice of characters designed to be thrown together for the purposes of fiction. But although they may be type-parts they are all admirably taken. The most spectacular, from an acting point of view, is perhaps the drunken doctor (THOMAS MITCHELL); but there is hardly any point in singling out one player from the eight or nine, for all have roughly the same amount to do, and together with the wild country, the wild riding and the excellent detail they make *Stagecoach* one of the most absorbing and exciting films I have seen for some time.

There is a good deal of very effective musical accompaniment, based on American folk-tunes (the cheerful air that symbolises the progress of the coach has been in my head ever since); but I ask you to notice particularly the brilliant use, here and there, of absolute silence.

From team-work to virtuosity: ROBERT DONAT in *Good-bye, Mr. Chips!* (Director: SAM WOOD). This of course is a pleasant bath of sentiment, and we should not allow an American critic's eccentric

claim that it is “the best moving picture ever made” to prejudice us against it. Parts of it are funny (though in a well-worn way), parts are moving, and ROBERT DONAT gives an impressively varied perform-



FORERUNNER OF THE STRAP-HANGER

Mr. Peacock DONALD MEEK
Mr. Gatewood BERTON CHURCHILL
Doc Boone THOMAS MITCHELL



CHAPS

Mr. Chips ROBERT DONAT

ance as the young, middle-aged and old schoolmaster, *Mr. Chipping*. It's always easy to be taken in by skilful make-up and the skilful use of stock mannerisms, but it does seem to me that Mr. DONAT's portrait is more than merely superficial, that he does succeed in giving depth to the part.

GREER GARSON appears briefly as his wife, and does very well. (Is the Austrian interlude in which he meets her meant to be romanticised as he looks back on it, in the way of the ball in *Un Carnet de Bal*? That would be an excuse for its lusciousness.) There are glimpses of other masters: little more than personifications of sternness, zeal for innovation, pomposity. And all the interstices in the picture are filled up with masses of boys, including TERRY KILBURN, who fills more than his fair share by appearing as a young Colley in no fewer than four generations.

Confessions of a Nazi Spy (Director: ANATOLE LITVAK) is a strange and very significant film based, I gather, entirely on fact. It might almost be an expanded *March of Time* issue. There is no doubt about its force: one comes out afterwards still half in the grip of its nightmare atmosphere: minutes go by before one remembers that the aim of the normal human being is to be happy and (if it isn't too much trouble) make others happy, and not to act in blind obedience to some distant ruler whose crazy ambition is to dominate the world. It has evidently been deliberately made to give an impression of actuality: all the credit titles are at the end, not the beginning, and at intervals a commentator with a *March of Time* manner takes up the tale. There are several old friends in the cast: EDWARD G. ROBINSON is the investigator who perseveres to uncover the spy plot, and FRANCIS LEDERER, as the discontented expatriate who turns to espionage for the sake of money, at last has a part with some meat in it; but their skill only heightens the general impression. Nightmare. But the audience has a lot of fun hissing and clapping.

If you want to get rid of the taste of unpleasant reality you might do worse than *You Can't Cheat an Honest Man* (Director: GEORGE MARSHALL). Not a vintage W. C. FIELDS, but he has some glorious moments; and so do EDGAR BERGEN and “Charlie McCarthy” and “Mortimer Snerd.” As incredible as the Nazis, but funnier and a good deal more pleasant. R. M.



"No, we are not listening-in to Wimbledon this year."

Hamlet Without Tears

"GO, bid the soldiers shoot!" declaimed Mrs. Sharpe in ringing tones.

My aunt closed her book with a snap and a sniff.

"Well," she said, "what do you all think of it?"

"Of course," said Sharpe cautiously, "it's very fine and all that, but what I want to know is—how to apply it?"

"Apply it?" I asked.

"Yes, to a set of normal people like—well—say us."

"Do you think we are normal?"

"I should certainly hope so," said one of the ladies emphatically.

"Well, then," I said to Sharpe, "if you feel normal, tell us what you think of it all."

"I think," said Sharpe, "that the poor fellow was his own worst enemy."

There was a murmur of approval.

"Yes," I said. "That, however, might be said of—well, Macbeth, Lear, and a whole crowd of Shakespeare's characters."

"Exactly," said Sharpe, "and that is the criticism I should like to make about Shakespeare: you can't apply him in any practical way."

"Don't you think," I said, "that if you really concentrated on Horatio more you'd see the whole point of the play?"

"How do you mean?" asked Mrs. Sharpe, handing round sandwiches.

"Well," I said, "the whole play seems to me to be a perfectly straightforward account of the early career of a normal man, like any of us. He goes away to stay, as it happens, with the Hamlet family, manages to steer clear of all entanglements and gets a good job under Fortinbras."

"A model career," said my Uncle George, as he munched, "for any of our boys." And he looked meaningfully at me.

"In fact," I pursued, "he might be anywhere to-day, even in this room, munching sandwiches."

I saw Mrs. Sharpe looking anxiously at us.

"Were you—are you by any chance Horatio, Uncle George?" I asked.

"Not I!" he said. "Francisco is the man for me: he got off to bed, did you notice, before anything happened." And he got up.

"You are very rude, George," said my aunt, rising also, "after all Mrs. Sharpe's kindness."

"Get along with you, Gertrude!" he replied. "Do you think I can't deal with my own nephew?"

"Why," I said wonderingly, "if it isn't Uncle Claudius!"

The rest was silence.

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Exegi Monumentum

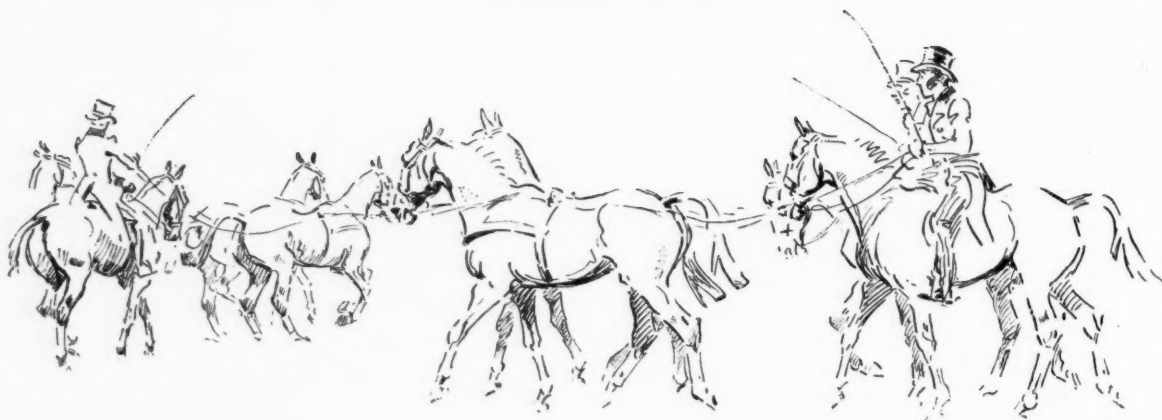
["Miss Marble will wear those famous shorts again."—*News Item.*]

DISDAINING monuments of brass,

Fame chooses Marble for her song:
Though Wimbledons unnumbered pass,
Her shorts will keep her memory long.

Olympia

The International Horse Show



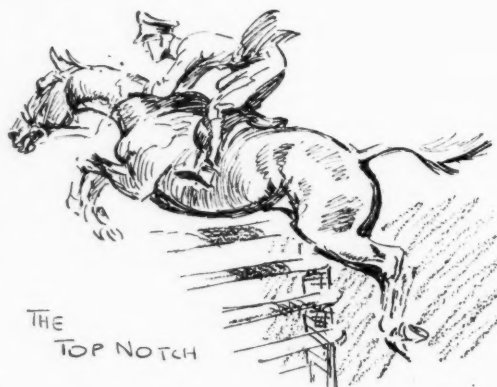
AN ELEGANT BUT EXTRAVAGANT FORM OF EQUITATION

ALL horses, they say, are fit for heaven, and Olympia brings together the fittest of all; indeed, the class of entry this year was so high that the average hippophile could forget the hardness of the seats in pure admiration and envy—emotions just as good for the soul, by the way, as pity and terror. The driving classes were particularly rousing, from the Shetland ponies forty inches high to the Mappin Cup Coaching Marathon, and we were given a new opportunity to admire Miss JOSEPHINE COLEBROOK, a perfect whip and a perfect artist, with what DE QUINCEY called “the skill in aurigation of an Apollo, with the horses of Apollo to execute her notions”—he put it rather heavily, I admit, but the flavour of literature and stables go well together. The children rode with exquisite self-possession and showed ponies which were mighty atoms indeed as though they were the most sedate of grass-fed hacks. The officers’ jumping classes were distinguished this year by the reappearance of the Italian team after several years’ absence, and provided, as usual, a magnificent spectacle, something akin to magic, or at least to levitation. Captain BIZARD once again rode Honduras in the King George V Cup, and once again a full house was electrified to see the famous black hindquarters and docked tail disappearing over the post and rail, the stick-heap, and the critically difficult double cross-bar, an obstacle which would certainly have prevented Turpin from making much headway between London and York. Honduras was beaten by the Italian Adigrat, a remarkable jumper, apparently with Sorbo blood in his veins, and beautifully ridden. The Edward Prince of Wales Cup, as always the most interesting event, was capably won this

year by the British team, and here the competitors had to clear that puzzling fence, the Garden Wall. It is a pretty little white gate between two ornamental brick pillars, and quite astoundingly unpopular with the horses. In the civilian classes they refused it, nibbled at it, haughtily ignored it or laid it low with devastating neatness; they could see beyond it the courageously painted background of delphiniums, pinks and roses, and they thought perhaps that they might land on a front lawn.

Every year the International Horse Show Directors have the difficult problem of providing a popular entertainment without lessening its quality and its appeal to specialists. A knowledgeable person, who sat in the row behind me and commanded the attention of everyone round him with the phrase, “Now if I was down there among the judges,”

told me that the Show ought to be livened up with a few paper-hoops, and a horse or so jumping over motor-bicycles. But like other knowledgeable persons, he was exactly wrong. The flavour of the circus is delicious, but it must not be allowed to creep into the International Horse Show. The displays this year given by the British Riding Club hit the nail exactly on the head; they were attractive and picturesque, but they were also subtle and the result of patience, hard work and pure skill. The tandem ride, performed in grass-green velvet coats and beaver top-hats, is something new to this country and a joy



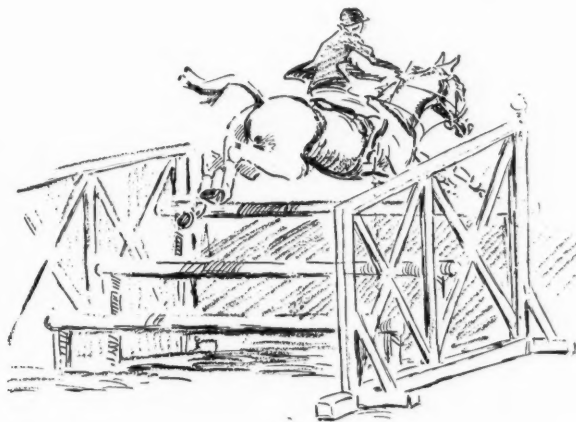
to watch. An expert pointed out—to the confusion of the knowledgeable person—that when riding one horse and driving another you lose all the purchase against the dashboard which can be used in driving tandem from a gig to check the leader; this display, then, is even more difficult

than it appears. A quadrille on horseback was produced in the evenings with sumptuous Charles I costumes, paper rose bushes, and artificial greensward, and it was a revelation in how neatly the noble but clumsy animal can be manoeuvred. Here, as everywhere else in the Show, the horses seemed inspired by the music of the Royal Marines Band; I noticed, in fact, with surprise, that they seemed to redouble their efforts in the jumping classes to the strains of "A Life On The Ocean Wave."

The reconstruction of Piccadilly Circus, produced by Mr. RICHARD BALLS, who has been responsible for the horses in three different Coronations, was the most impressive moment of the Show. Further it confuted those who lament the vanished quietness of London. The noise of two horse-buses, a curricule, two coster's carts, a governess-cart, a noble brewer's dray, a carrier's van, a landau, a fire-engine at the gallop, a coach-and-four, and a full complement of mashers, dudes and Guardsmen, was overwhelming.



"COME ON, GIRLIE!"



GIRLIE'S ANSWER

The Indoor Polo was gallantly played but, as usual, it suggested one-stump cricket—it was a half-hearted substitute, and the closed ends and boxed-in sides caused an undignified jam of ponies, bodies, ball and sticks round the goals. "Nothing is more dismal," Sir MAX BEERBOHM once wrote, "than to see set in rigidity a thing whose aspect is linked for us with the idea of great mobility," and this surely applies to stagnant polo. It gives the audience, however, a taste of the game, and in the afternoons they were privileged to see ladies' teams for the first time at Olympia. Very neatly they played; but indoor polo wouldn't have done—not for the Duke, but, say, for the Maltese Cat.

Major FAUDEL-PHILLIPS, on a grey horse of engaging manners, could only occasionally be glimpsed amid the carefully-arranged confusion. The programme described this as "vehicles of the period pursuing their leisurely course around the statue," but fortunately this was an understatement; even the governess-cart was driven with *brio*. The only thing missing was a hansom containing *Holmes and Watson*, in full pursuit of *Moriarty*; but on the whole I was inclined to recognise *Holmes* in the villainous-looking character who raised the cry of fire—the identical ruse, after all, of *A Scandal in Bohemia*.



"GOOD-BYE—AND HAPPY LANDING."



"It may be silly of me, but I always think the lights turn much quicker if you don't watch them."

No, Mrs. Fortescue!

NO, Mrs. Fortescue, I won't bring my golf-clubs
 And I will tell you why;
 I brought them before,
 An error I deplore
 For the rounds that resulted shook me to the core
 And I wouldn't repeat the experience for anything—
 Honestly, I'd rather die.

Leaving out the fact that the course we have to
 play on
 Is one of the worst I know,
 That it's long and it's rough
 And the miserable stuff
 Miscalled the fairway isn't wide enough,
 So that balls get lost at a rate that's insupportable—
 Every other hole or so;

And the fact that you regulate the choice of one's
 opponents
 Somewhat exclusively,
 So that early or late
 I couldn't make a date
 And it seemed to become my inevitable fate
 To be playing the best ball of you and the Vicar
 When you weren't playing me;

Washing out these and coming to essentials—
 What about those damned Pekes?

You *would* take them round,
 And it's terrible, I found,
 To contend with a Peke-pack cumbering the ground.
 What's the good of golf in the midst of a menagerie?
 Nasty little pop-eyed freaks!

So the Pekes put the lid upon the other disadvantages
 For ever and ever, Amen!
 Not allowed to swear
 (The Vicar being there)
 And *another* ball vanished the Lord knew where
 And the whole course swarming with yapping little
 animals—
 Never, no never again!

And so when you write to me, "Do bring your golf-
 clubs"—

No, Mrs. Fortescue!
 I'll come and I'll stay
 And willingly I'll play
 Billiards or badminton or anything you say;
 But the golf-course—that shall be the permanent possession
 Of the Vicar and the Pekes and you. H. B.



THE HELPING HAND

June

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Impressions of Parliament

Synopsis of the Week

Monday, June 19th.—Commons: Ministry of Supply Bill taken in Committee.

Tuesday, June 20th.—Lords: Draft Orders for Moratorium for Militiamen approved.

Commons: Government Proposal for Memorial to King George V agreed to. Ministry of Supply Bill taken in Committee.

Wednesday, June 21st.—Lords: Debate on Population.

Commons: Draft Orders for Moratorium for Militiamen approved.

Monday, June 19th.—The world is still being difficult; in particular the Japanese, who are giving an excellent performance of their traditional piece of magic in which they gain face the more they lose their heads.

In answer to a number of questions Mr. CHAMBERLAIN described how British subjects had been ill-treated at the barriers at Tientsin, and how perishable foodstuffs and ice bound for the British Concession had been held up. Although the general position was not yet clear, the original demand that the four Chinese should be handed over appeared to have been confused by

being maintained with the French and American Governments, and our offer to submit the question of the four suspects to an international committee still held good. In answer to a supplementary by Mr. EDEN, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN assured the House that whatever



The Chef (Sir JOHN SIMON). "WON'T DEAR FIDO BE PLEASED! AND ANYWAY I CAN'T MAKE MUCH OUT OF IT!"

steps might be necessary to ensure food supplies for the beleaguered British would be taken. This statement drew cheers.

The Labour Party, natural enemies of autocracy, are in the peculiar position of demanding much fuller powers for Mr. BURGIN when he becomes Minister of Supply. In this evening's debate Mr. DALTON declared that the new Ministry would not be more than a sub-section of the War Office, and demanded that it should take over all supplies for the three Services, with the possible exception of naval shipbuilding.

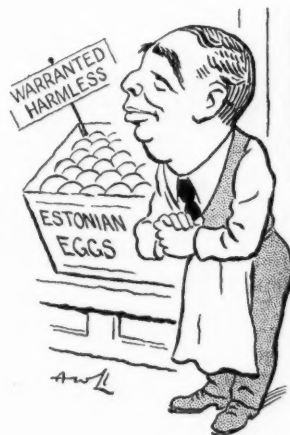
Mr. HAROLD MACMILLAN having made a prophecy (he might have made a book on it) that a full Ministry would be set up within three or six months, or earlier if the situation went to bits, Mr. BURGIN politely declined the powers which were being urged on him and insisted that those in the Bill were enough for a start, since others could always be transferred to him by an Order in Council.

Tuesday, June 20th.—Lord HALIFAX's statement about Tientsin was in much the same terms as that of Mr. CHAMBERLAIN yesterday. When the Lords came to consider the Draft Orders which have been designed mainly to protect the insurance policies of militiamen during their period of service, there was general criticism on the grounds of vagueness, and Lord MERSEY complained that the Government were not themselves shouldering the risk, as they did in the last War, but were passing it on to the

insurance companies. Admitting that the Orders were imperfect, because of the pressure on the draftsmen, and that they would soon have to be amended, the LORD CHANCELLOR asked the House to approve them as they were needed urgently. Reluctantly the House complied, depressed by the LORD CHANCELLOR's reminder that if war should come D.O.R.A. would once again hold sway. The lighter side of English life has never recovered from the blight of that detestable creature.

Why the British Army should eat Estonian eggs when the British poultry-farmer is almost bankrupt is hard to understand, but Mr. HORE-BELISHA held to-day that these eggs were so good that recently a man had eaten five of them voluntarily. Mr. TURTON, however, had information that the eggs were bright-green inside, and was convinced that something must have been wrong somewhere.

After Sir JOHN SIMON had fought another lengthy rear-guard action in defence of the British directors of the Bank for International Settlements, during which he admitted that he viewed the transference of the Czech gold to Germany as a deplorable event while seeing no legal way out, the P.M. announced that Thursday's sitting would be suspended so that Members could welcome the KING and



A BALTIC STATE GUARANTEE
MR. HORE-BELISHA

QUEEN as they passed, and asked the House to agree to the modified plan for a Memorial at Westminster to KING GEORGE V. This it readily did.

In the evening a small band of indignant Conservatives voted against the Government in protest against the power given to the new Minister by the



CAUGHT SHORT

"I am afraid I have not in my pocket an example."—Sir PERCY HARRIS.

the introduction of larger issues of general policy. The FOREIGN SECRETARY was seeing the Japanese Ambassador and our Ambassador in Tokio was doing what he could to clear the situation up. Close touch was



"Is there anything in the shop you can bear to part with?"

Ministry of Supply Bill to appoint his own arbitrators to settle disputes between himself and industrialists. Mr. HERBERT MORRISON had no such objection, for he argued that the Minister of Labour already had similar powers which worked well, but Mr. BRACKEN and others fastened bitterly on an unfortunate phrase of Mr. BURGIN's about "rough business justice."

Wednesday, June 21st.—The Lords had a good debate on the decline in the population, on a motion by Lord SAMUEL, who declared that, as the census of 1931 showed that the number of live births per thousand women was exactly half what it was in 1891, the matter was urgent. He called for a Royal Commission to consider it, and for a number of measures, including a system of family allowances. Other speakers agreed that allowances were needed, and Lord DAWSON suggested that these could be in token form and payable to the mother. The Bishop of NORWICH described how his predecessor a hundred years ago had had not only thirty-seven children but also

two brothers who had each had thirty-two, which made the House sit up; but Lord TEMPLEMORE, unimpressed by these glories of the past, replied that in those countries which gave family allowances there seemed no significant effect on the birth-rate.



OUR BACK-BENCH WHO'S WHO

The L.C.C. without its Mr. SILKIN
Would be a coconut without the
milk in.

He thought his fellows rather gloomy, and pointed out that our birth-rate has been rising since 1934.

The P.M. had little fresh to say about Tientsin. At present there is plenty of flour and rice in the Concession.

Sir JOHN SIMON's announcement that he was dropping the excise duty on cinematograph films, proposed in the Budget, was heartily cheered. All else aside, this is hardly the moment to discourage an industry potentially so important for propaganda.

The Draft Orders for the Militia Moratorium arrived from the Lords and were approved after severe criticism from all parties.

Seasonable Hint

"JUNE
10

SATURDAY

Frozen Pipes.—Force salt as far down the pipe as possible and after a short time pour down boiling water. A blocked pipe may often be cleared in the same way, adding soda to the salt and boiling water."

Tear-off Calendar.

A Couple of Cash Customers

THE Chief doesn't really understand wireless. To me his mind is mainly harping on pianos, where he started.

"You knew where you were with music rolls," he said.

"I dare say," I said.

"Well then," said the Chief.

He was leading up to the Grandio question again.

The Grandio was the set we came out with as "The Station-Getter Par Elegance." It also had a smashing chassis and was dirt cheap on furniture value, but they're not up to a Super-Anodyne in our district.

"It's a matter of price and ignorance," I said.

"Ignorance is your job," said the Chief.

"I can't teach nobody," I said.

"Pull yourself together," said the Chief.

"I mean nobody," I said.

"Read that," said the Chief.

It was a picture post-card of the Recreation Ground. On the back, written very small, it was some Miss Adams after a wireless set.

"P.S. Must be good runner," I said.

"Yes," said the Chief.

"What she wants is a Runabout Five," I said.

"Maybe," said the Chief, "but I've made up my mind to meet her on the mahogany Grandio."

"That's the one we had back for not working off the gas," I said.

"That's right," said the Chief.

"I don't like the sound of it," I said.

"I don't like the look of my books," said the Chief.

There's nobody more obstinate when he gets an idea in his head, particularly as he'd fixed it for the afternoon anyway.

"All I can say is I shall have to put off a very likely client," I said.

"Likely clients can never come up to cash customers," said the Chief.

"You're entitled to your opinion," I said.

"There it is," said the Chief.

Well, according to the van-man it was a house called "Clovelly" we were after, and it was a rum-looking address when we found it.

There were bits of coconut and baskets of plants all over it, and you had to wind up the bell yourself before you got anywhere.

The woman who opened the door had her glasses fixed to a stick.

The van-man gave a kind of salute he has.

"Grandio!" he said. "Magic maestro of the ether."

The woman dropped her glasses and put the door on the chain.

"There's a time and a place for that," I said.

Another woman popped out of the upstairs window.

"What's going on?" she said.

"We're just trying to deliver your wireless," I said.

"Fuss!" she said, and popped in again.

"What next?" said the van-man.

"Quiet," I said.

The downstairs one peeped out and took the door off the chain.

"Good afternoon," I said.

"We can't have shavings," she said.

"Come to that, there aren't any shavings," I said.

"Not with a Grandio," said the van-man.

"Well!" she said.

"All right," I said to the van-man.

"Take her legs."

"No! No!" shouted someone from inside.

It was the upstairs one, on us before we could move.

"Those boots," she said.

"It's only his leggings," I said.

"His boots are no worse than mine are."

"Is that quite true?" she said to the van-man.

"Look here——" said the van-man.

"Now keep your hair on," I said.

"Hair?" said the downstairs one.

We put the Grandio down again.

"Which of you two ladies is Miss Adams?" I said.

"I am," they said.

"You might as well be getting along," I said to the van-man.

Well, tact is one thing, but so is lugging a Grandio about single-handed and having difficulties put in your way.

Prim and Clem, they called each other, and they wouldn't have anything.

It was no aerial, no earth, mind the legs, and lightning on the fire-irons. Finally, it was no mains on account of electricity.

"It's no use talking like that," I said. "You're up against the whole principle of wireless."

Miss Prim gave me a cup of tea and a stale cheese-cake.

"Thanks very much," I said, and quietly gave them a nice cinema organ on National.

"Well, there you are," I said.

"What else have you got?" said Miss Prim.

"For the time being I should just stick to National," I said.

"We've always done that," said Miss Clem.

"Then there's nothing more to worry about," I said. "Off. Loud. Soft."

Miss Prim tied a piece of wool on it.

"Simple, isn't it?" I said.

"Like a piano," said Miss Clem.

"Near enough," I said, "and anyway we're always on the telephone."

It was overtime as it was and nothing for it that I could see.

Well, the next morning the Chief was hanging about on the door-step as though I'd had a week's holiday.

"Where have you been?" he said.

"Been?" I said. "You're going to have some trouble over that Grandio."

"Trouble?" said the Chief. "Take that telephone before I go crazy."

"Telephone?" I said.

"Telephone," said the Chief.

It was Miss Adams all right, though she was talking so fast it hardly made sense.

"How do you mean—'awful'?" I said.

"It's no good," she said. "Noise, noise, noise. My head's swimming."

"Touch nothing," I said.

"Take the van," said the Chief.

Miss Prim, the one without the glasses, opened the door.

"It's terrible," she said.

"A bit too loud for you?" I said.

"Good gracious!" said Miss Prim.

"You can hardly hear it."

"Hardly hear it?" I said.

"Not when you're talking," said Miss Prim.

Out came Miss Clem waving the instruction book.

"Not a moment longer," she said.

"Why, Miss Adams says——" I said.

"Shout, shout, shout, to make yourself heard," said Miss Clem.

"Well. . . ." I said.

"Take it away," said Miss Clem.

"Take it away?" I said.

"Sufficient," said Miss Prim.

We got the Grandio out on the door-step.

"Look here, Miss Adams——" I said.

Miss Clem fixed the glasses on us and Miss Prim shut the door in our faces.

"You'd think people would be more educated," said the van-man.

"Educated?" I said. "If you ask me we might as well be back in the crystal days."

At the Play

"BRIDGE OF SIGHS" (ST. MARTIN'S)

THIS is a play in which it must be very enjoyable to have a part if you are an actor who loves acting. The parts are numerous and of wide emotional range. There is *Catherine, Empress of Russia* (Miss JUDY KELLY), dealing with her ministers with alternating caprice and severity, always more of a woman than a queen, self-centred, small-minded, and not loved. There are parts depicting her servants, men of some capacity and inferior character: *Potemkin* (Mr. ROY EMERTON), a hard self-made man, with a vigour which also recommends him as a personal favourite to *Catherine's* far from fastidious taste. There is in particular, for one actor (Mr. REGINALD TATE), the part of *Count Alexis Orloff*, a sort of Russian Nelson, High-Admiral of the Fleet, intrepid, and prepared to withstand his own sovereign as well as to chase the Turk.

The play centres in the performance by *Count Alexis* of a particularly unpleasant little mission, the abduction from Ragusa of a young girl who is being groomed as a pretender to the throne. His orders are to bring her back alive, but when he reaches Ragusa the real *Elizabeth Tarakanova* (Miss GAYANE MICKELADZE) is not at all the person of the spies' reports. She is a very young and gay girl with no thought of politics, much bored at being selected for the central rôle by the little crew of amateur conspirators, representing powers hostile to Russia, who make her little villa the scene of their talks. They are amateur, unimpressive conspirators; the best man among them is *Father Chanecki* (Mr. HENRY HALLATT), who has some fanaticism, some intrepidity and some decision. But they cut no ice, and the real interest of the play is nothing to do with them. It is found in the love which *Tarakanova* in her simplicity comes to feel for *Count Alexis*, a love which he reciprocates, though not to the point of faltering in his mission of abduction. Mr. REGINALD TATE brings to this part among other

valuable gifts a powerful voice. He beats down opposition in conversation, he has no trouble in holding his own with men or winning his way with women. He becomes profoundly



AGENT PROVOCATEUR

Elizabeth Tarakanova . . . MISS GAYANE MICKELADZE
Count Alexis Orloff . . . MR. REGINALD TATE

ashamed at what he is doing in capturing and bringing before the small mercies of *Catherine* and *Potemkin* an entirely innocent and over-trusting young woman. But his career comes

first. She is sacrificed at the close of an evening which it has been the actors' business to make painful, and it is the measure in particular of Miss GAYANE MICKELADZE's abilities and her power of showing inner desolation that we feel the tragedy at the end as poignantly as we do.

Bridge of Sighs is very well produced. How well may be measured when it is said that a quite small part—that of the sailor batman on the ship, only appearing in one scene—is played by Mr. STANLEY LATHBURY. It is a tough old sailor that he has to portray, and one who does not give scope for Mr. LATHBURY's excellent subtleties, but the scene is made by his appearance. In the same way there is a quite excellent minor figure, the French Minister at Ragusa (Mr. BERNARD REBEL), and a rich eccentric Englishman, *Edward Wortley Montague* (Mr. JAMES RAGLAN).

There was, there is, a famous old *Punch* joke of the two women looking at a painting of Cleopatra in her evil splendour and exclaiming: "How different to the home-life of our own dear Queen!" I had not ever expected to meet this in real life, but I did at *Bridge of Sighs*. Miss JUDY KELLY was at the top of her form, showing us a *Catherine* bent on humiliating a rival, demanding that the hapless *Tarakanova* be brought before her to confess her crimes and beg her pardon, and then her life would be spared, when I heard a woman behind me say to her friend, "That is what one feels about our own King and Queen: they are so really moral"; and a little later she said: "Of course the British throne is not like any other."

Bridge of Sighs shows the relentless cruelty of high politics, careless of its victims. It is a lesson against women despots, but basically its time and place are an accidental setting, and these costume-plays make extra difficulties for the actors; but they are difficulties which this company takes easily in its stride.

D. W.



THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

Potemkin MR. ROY EMERTON
Catherine, Empress of Russia MISS JUDY KELLY

"Swarm of Bees wanted, must be reasonable."

Advt. in Letchworth Paper.
Any particular politics?

At the Music-Hall

HOLBORN EMPIRE

THE neatest worker here is WENCES, the ventriloquist, whom I have somehow managed to miss hitherto. He has originality as well as great skill, and I warmed to him from the first because his puppet, much funnier than the usual rather revolting specimens, gets its head from his left hand. He fits a wig and eyes over the back of the hand and rouges the inside of his thumb and forefinger to make a mouth capable of almost any expression.

The turn opens with a singing-lesson in which the puppet is agonisingly just off the note. WENCES is a gentle instructor, very patient, and in time there is a faint improvement in the puppet's ear; but there is none in his heart, for he shows WENCES no gratitude at all and has a shocking habit of swearing at his master under his breath in a tumbling stream of vituperation. That is the chief charm of WENCES, everything he does is so unexpectedly quiet. On his table is a large polished wooden box of the sort which would normally house a microscope or a small gas-meter, and in this lives the third member of the team, a large waxen face, very well-dined and looking like a mask taken from NERO at the peak moment of the annual slave-crunching finals. He acts as unofficial adviser to WENCES, his powerful tones muffled a bit by the box until the door is opened. WENCES trying to telephone is a wonderful exhibition of voice-throwing, for the puppet sounds like a very angry A.B. a long way off and NERO adds his commentary from the royal box.

What might be called the life and soul of the party are the DIAMOND BROTHERS, three indiarubbery little knockabouts who have produced the show, weaving its separate turns into an up-to-date "craziness," and who gag and slapstick all through it. They are quite funny in the somewhat worn convention of mutual assault and battery. How long, I wonder, do their clothes stand up to it? Whoever has the contract for their hats must be sitting back and

calling himself a lucky man. In the wings lurks some old enemy waiting with a plank nearly as high as the Empire, which he lets fall on them at well-selected but yet not fatal moments.

riot at the Zoo, but this curious amalgam is now undoubtedly what the public wants, and about the efficiency of the HOT SHOTS there can be no question. JOE DANIELS hits the drums with a pace and swerve which is dazzling, and when they get tired he is just as good on frying-pans and scrubbing-boards brought up from the kitchen; TEDDY FOSTER goes by the name of the "Swing-King" of the trumpet and gets amazing results from it. That neither he nor the trumpet bursts is a most generous tribute to the human design and to the strides that have been made in metallurgy.

Equally skilled but I am afraid no nearer to my taste are RAWICZ and LANDAUEE, pianists at twin instruments which have mirrors built in above the keyboards so that no trick of fingering is lost on the audience. These two gentlemen give a firework display which crackles and rockets all over the place and is very cleverly co-ordinated; but they murdered the "Blue Danube," and that to me is a crime. I should like to see a Society for the Protection of Dear Old Numbers; but I don't believe the public minds a scrap if they are played upside-down, inside-out, or at five times their natural speed.

BILLY DANVERS is an old favourite and has an attractive way with him. He is the stoutish man you meet in trains who knows his Blackpool well and tells you just what happened to his wife's aunt. How he dares throw off the one about the school-mistress who said "Aren't you one of the fathers of my children?" is more than I can grasp; but perhaps because it was a chestnut at the Battle of Thermopylae he is to be admired. While we are on the subject, the remark (I forget who made it in this show) that someone had "picked that up at their mother's knee, or some other low joint" is new to me, and pleasing.

Of the others Miss BOBBIE RAYE sings well, GRAY, AUSTIN and WORTH juggle up to standard, LUCILLE and FRANK dance glamorously, and ARCHIE GLEN specialises in unfortunate but effective interjections.

ERIC.



A PUPPET OUT OF HAND

WENCES

The most applause was won by a high-speed supercharged band called the HOT SHOTS. The audience drank down its strident and unbelievable noises with every evidence of ecstasy. To me it sounded a straight cross between the fall of Jericho and a racial



DIAMOND BUMP DIAMOND

THE DIAMOND BROTHERS

Letters to Officialdom

XXXII.—Re Telephone Account

To the District Manager, Post Office
Telephones, High Street, Rumborough.

DEAR SIR,—When sending me my telephone account for the current quarter kindly state on the form showing "Details of Charges for Trunk and Toll Calls, Telegrams and Postal Services," to whom each of the calls was made and how long each of them lasted. Several calls that I made were unduly prolonged through

no fault of my own, and I wish to see if the charges have been fairly adjusted in these cases.

It's all very fine to say in the *Telephone Directory* that a successful call is the result of co-operation between the caller, the exchange and the distant subscriber, and that "all three parties must work in harmony," but now that our local system is being turned into an automatic one a caller is often entangled with at least eight parties,

none of whom is the exchange or the distant subscriber. In fact not so long ago, when telephoning from Wiltshire to Cornwall, I found myself working in harmony with someone in Yorkshire and co-operating in a personal conversation between two business-men, who were both rude to me—and just as I was trying to get the supervisor my wife came through on the extension and asked if I was the butcher. So I just said, "Hullo, dear!" and she said, "Why, Arnold, my dear!" and as my name happens to be Charles and the butcher's Percy this added to my general bewilderment.

Anyway, unless I check up on prolonged calls of this sort I shall be grossly overcharged. Let me quote a particularly annoying instance which occurred this month.

My broker telephoned from London to say that United Gumboots and Goloshes were dropping about a point a minute owing to the drought, and should he sell out? As I never make any financial decisions without referring to my wife, I exclaimed, "Hold on!" and hastened off to look for her. When I returned I found to my dismay that my broker had rung off, having (as I learned later) understood me to mean that he was to hold on to the shares.

There was no time to waste. I agitated the receiver-hook but could get no reply. I spoke clearly, deliberately and even forcibly into the transmitter but could still get no answer. Suddenly a loud zizz in the receiver so startled me that I dropped it, and when I picked it up the operator said, "Hullo, Rumborough 59. You left your receiver off."

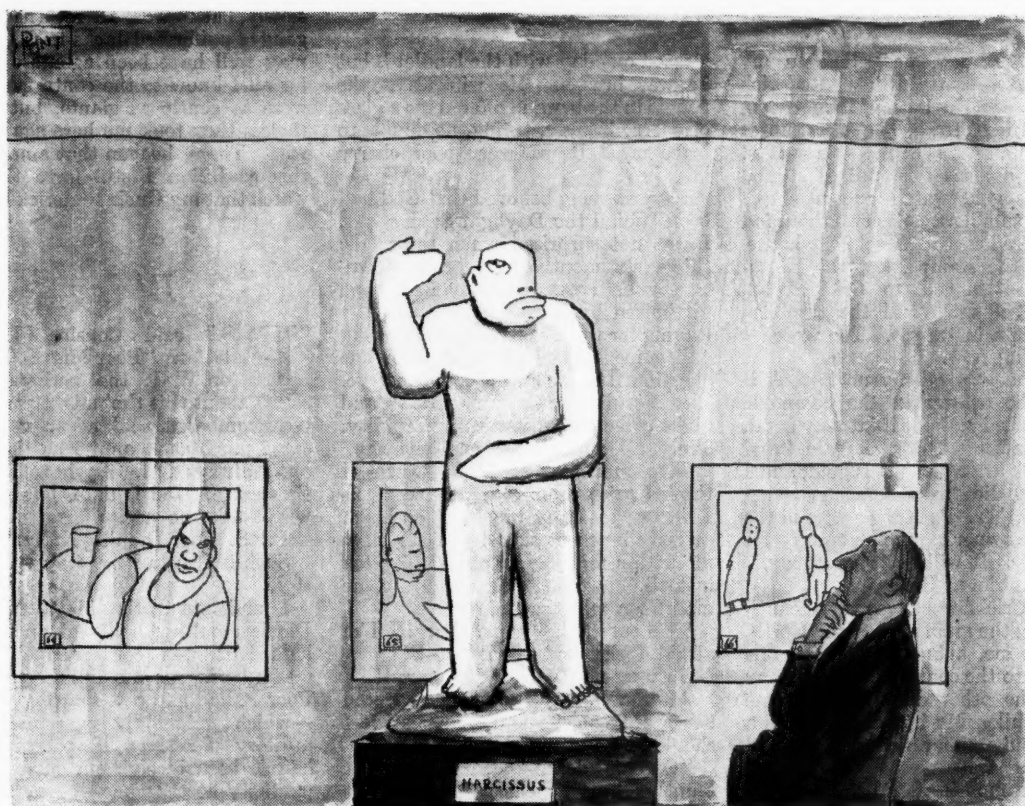
I explained shortly that I was making a call. I asked for Trunks. She gave me Telegrams. I asked for Trunks. Telegrams gave me Directory Inquiry. I asked for Trunks. Directory Inquiry gave me Exchange. So I asked for Supervisor. Then, without any warning at all, I got Trunks.

Congratulating myself on this stroke of good luck I asked for Dryden 1939, which is my broker's number. The operator told me that all the trunk-lines were engaged and offered to call me. I hung up, allowed a full minute to pass, then tried again. This time the call went through with commendable promptitude, but not to my broker. I was connected with a paint-works in Manchester.

Fuming with annoyance, I recalled the operator, gave her a piece of my mind and repeated the London number. By this time, I reflected feverishly, United Gumboots and Goloshes must have dropped another six points. Panic took hold of me. Then there was



"The staff are tired of being called 'Boy,' so I've engaged this for you, Sir."



POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS—ART

a lot of clicking and buzzing, and the operator said, "Is that Rumborough 59?" "Yes," I replied urgently. "You're through," she said to the caller, and to my unbounded fury there was Miss Elderleigh Leigh-Elder on the line, wishing to know if my wife and I would have tea with her on Sunday.

Before I could answer the line went dead, and after a short silence an entirely different operator said, "Number, please?" Scarcely able to control myself I told her I wanted Dryden 1939. She informed me that it would be a Trunk call. Then the first operator came through to say she had got my London number, and in less time than it takes to tell I was connected with the Natural History Museum.

At that I lost my temper. I banged down the receiver. The telephone immediately rang. I picked up the receiver and both operators spoke to me at once. They wished to know if I

had finished. Then something exploded (so it seemed) in the receiver, and when I recovered my hearing there was Miss Leigh-Elder again, saying she was afraid we had been cut off. Simultaneously, at long last, I heard my broker on the line. (I had been at the telephone for twenty minutes, mark you!) But before I could speak to him he disappeared, and so did Miss Leigh-Elder, and a perfectly strange voice said, "Hullo, Queenie! Is that you?"

I informed the gentleman that it wasn't Queenie and curtly asked him to get off the line. Then someone asked me if I was Rumborough 59 and said there was a telegram for me. I said I didn't want it. Suddenly, as if by magic, my broker reappeared. Seizing the opportunity I shouted, "This is Cursett! Sell out!"

I was just in time. He disappeared and Telegrams came through again. The wire was from my broker, stating that United Gumboots and Goloshes

had recovered and were soaring. *Soaring*—and I had just told him to sell out!

Of course my first instinct was to ring him again. But I realised the futility of it. Instead I wired to a friend of mine in Wimbledon, asking him to bicycle into the City and give my broker a message.

Happily I extricated myself without loss, so I shall not broach the question of damages, but when my telephone account reaches me I shall take good care to see that I am charged only for the ten seconds I spoke to my broker and not for the twenty-three minutes I spent at the telephone. Any attempt to make me pay for a longer call in this and other similar cases will result in my giving up the telephone altogether. And you needn't delude yourself with the idea that this would inconvenience me at all, because I keep carrier-pigeons.

Yours faithfully,

CHAS. CURSETT.

My Heirloom

A YEAR ago, according to my watch, my Uncle Roderick died. He left me a house in Westbourne Terrace, his collection of English stamps, a camera-portrait of his wife, a glass case full of stuffed snipe, his gold watch and a set of Hertford tumblers. Also two thousand five hundred a year. I sold the house, swapped the stamps, lost the photograph and moved to Cricklewood. The case of snipe and the tumblers were broken in transit. The watch I am wearing now.

On his death-bed my uncle took it out of the drawer in the commode beside his bed and put it into my hand. "Look after it, Peter," he said, "and it will look after you. It is gold, and I won it at dice from someone somewhere or other. Both the spot and the previous owner's name speak for themselves. It will never go wrong."

I buried him at Highgate.

Life in Cricklewood was very beautiful. Along the main road to the North, they told me, a bus would take one quickly into the countryside. A penny fare in the other direction took me nearly a mile. My housekeeper was a homely soul and her niece was married to a policeman.

About a month after I had entered my new residence, which was number twenty-two in the road, my housekeeper—whom I will call for the purpose of this narrative Mrs. Noaks, which was her name—took to bringing up my breakfast a few minutes too early.

I complained.

"Oh, very well, Sir," she said. "But the clock in the kitchen says nine."

"Very interesting," I said bitingly, "but my watch says it is ten to."

"Perhaps it is wrong," she replied sullenly.

I sat up in bed and put on my spectacles. "It was left me by my uncle and is twenty-two carat," I said impressively. She dropped her eyes and went.

After that I took to hanging the watch on the outside handle of the bedroom door when I retired for the night, so that Mrs. Noaks—whom for the purpose of this narrative I will call Mrs. Brown—could put right the other clocks by it. It was some months after this that other things in the great outside world began to go wrong. Trains were always before time, and I found the pub across the road had begun to open half an hour earlier than the law permitted. I remon-

strated one day with the landlord, but he was brazen. He winked at the people in the bar and offered me a glass of cherry brandy, trying, no doubt, to bribe me. It was very poor cherry brandy.

Never having believed that God had been behind the Daylight Saving Act, I was not surprised when the whole thing, six months ago, broke down. The poor creatures who had been victimised by it were now habitually leaving for work at five in the morning and going to bed at eight. No one questioned this so far as I could observe. The mornings were very bright and night came with astonishing rapidity. Truly, He works in a mysterious way.

Five months ago Mrs. Brown (I think I said) came to me to ask if, as I always took my breakfast at lunch and my lunch at six, she might serve me with a mid-day meal and high tea instead. Her impertinence made me mad for a minute.

"I'll eat at the proper times!" I'm afraid I shrieked—"so there!"

Poor woman! How she stared!

After a long silence she recovered her unruly spirits and asked me if I shouldn't have my watch seen to.

"On his death-bed," I told her bluntly, "my uncle assured me it would never go wrong. He was a B.A., an F.Z.S., an M.B.O.U. and C. of E."

That completely routed her.

By January anarchy was rife. The Communists, with Russian money, had undermined the whole social system of England. The hoodwinked mob went about their jobs at all hours, and the public-houses—as did all licensed premises—now opened their doors for custom in the small hours. The Aurora Borealis was plainly visible from Shoot-up Hill, and eclipses were a matter of daily occurrence. With such a Government what else could a sane man expect?

And then at the height of it my poor housekeeper's nerves gave way altogether. She told me that I must either stop having my morning coffee at sundown or she would give notice. I laughed openly in her face. Looking back on it I see I was unnecessarily rude, but it seemed the only way to combat her cheek. Blow for blow.

She returned perhaps fifteen minutes later, or perhaps twenty, with her nephew by marriage, one P. C. Hinder. (P.C. is not his initials; he is a policeman.) He was not a bad sort of chap, but as I had not invited him I chose to be very aloof. I advised him too

against burning the candle at both ends. He was cowed, and left the room slowly, backwards. He returned with a gang of uniformed Jacks-in-Office, who may well have been agents of H-t-l-r for all I know to the contrary. They were as gentle as giants, but nevertheless they took me here against my will. Thank heaven that amongst all this confusion I still have the gold watch that my Uncle Roderick left me!

B'day

"P.S." said Cousin Florence's letter. "Poor Miss L.'s b'day on Wed; tho' perhaps better say O about this tho' might please her if remembered tho' never very safe say 2 much as to anniv. as time goes on, I always feel. Anyhow, for what it is worth, Wed is date, but perhaps wisest take no notice."

P.P.S. Poor D. m'tg badly."

Such is Cousin Florence's epistolary style.

I understood the bit about poor Dickie moulting badly at once—and indeed it was comparatively easy, remembering, as one did, the year that Poor P. had had a v. sharp go of p.-d.—which might have remained a mystery for ever if parrot-disease hadn't been receiving a good deal of publicity at the time.

Miss L. and her b'day exercised one for a moment, but a little thought resulted in one's going round to The Bungalow with a small bunch of roses and a graceful speech of birthday wishes all ready to be delivered or left undelivered as the mood of Miss Littlebug should appear to render advisable.

Miss Littlebug, who was scanning a column in the newspaper headed: "What do the Planets Want You to Learn from Them To-day?", failed to come into the open.

"Dear, it's more than kind of you and roses are quite my favourite—wonderfully sharp the thorns always seem to be, don't they?—not that it matters, one quite expects it—no, dear, don't trouble, it's only blood. . . . I always think that as the years go by there's something so very sad about the way the seasons come round and round and round, don't you? And last year's roses, as the song says, are never quite the same ones as this year's roses. Still, I'm very grateful to you. I don't mind telling you, dear, quite frankly, that I was feeling the least little bit depressed before you came. It had actually crossed my mind more than once that the quickest way

to end it all would really be to spring out of the window, once and for all."

One glanced at the window almost involuntarily at this and was definitely reassured, for after all a bungalow is only a bungalow, and the window—besides being on the ground floor—was really rather on the small side and afforded no facilities whatever for springing.

"Is there any special reason, Miss Littlemug," one ventured to ask, "for your feeling—as I'm afraid you do—perhaps a tiny bit less bright than usual?"

Now, if ever, was the time for Miss Littlemug to mention her b'day—but she preferred to hedge.

"No, dear. I had a rather depressing communication by the post—but that was nothing. It only made me feel how utterly alone I am, without a friend in the world, that's all. It is of no importance."

"Oh, dear!"

"Don't say that, please. We must all come to it. I was just glancing at the week's Horoscopes, and I see that I have to prepare for a year of disappointment, with much worry concerned with an elderly relation, and a holiday late in the summer, which is not at all what I'd arranged. And now comes this card from Salisbury."

"Isn't Salisbury your cousins?"

"Only on my dear mother's side."

"I do hope it wasn't bad news."

"It was no news at all," replied Miss Littlemug in a most embittered manner. "What I mean, dear, is that this picture post-card—for that is all it was—simply tells me that they're trying to let the house for August and September, and poor Mollie's baby is over the croup, and Ursula's wedding is fixed at last for next February year if the young man can get over from Nova Scotia, and the new cook's a failure but they're on the track of another. And then some little postscript about a mole having been caught on the tennis-lawn."

"But that seems to me quite a lot of news, Miss Littlemug."

"Does it, dear? Well, when you come to my age you'll realise what it all means as the years go by in this extraordinary way, one after another, and those who might perhaps have been expected to remember simply forget. Not that it matters. To-day simply happens to be my birthday, that's all."

"Many happy ret—"

"No, dear. I know you mean it kindly, but I'd rather the day was wholly ignored. I don't know how I came to mention it at all, because I



"No. I'm not the Managin' Director. I'm speakin' per pro on behalf orf of 'im."

only wish it to be forgotten by everybody in the world. And naturally I can't help feeling a little bit hurt that no one has so much as remembered it."

So whichever way one looked at it the b'day was rather a failure or—as one thought of writing to Cousin Florence—Miss L.'s b'day not v.g.

E. M. D.

"The hair should be well brushed for five or ten minutes a day. This keeps the hair glossy and makes it grow; even if the hair falls out the brushing should be continued."

Suburban Paper.

Makes you remember where it was.

A Double Opportunity

IN January the Eumorfopoulos Art Collection was opened to the public in aid of the Chinese Universities Relief Fund of International Student Service. The Exhibition was a great success and is being repeated on Thursday, June 29th, and Saturday, July 1st. Admission (10 A.M. to 6 P.M.) is 5/- on Thursday, 2/6 on Saturday, and the address is 7, Chelsea Embankment, S.W.3. The double opportunity of seeing this magnificent collection of Chinese and other works of art, and at the same time helping destitute Chinese students, is not to be missed.



"I didn't realise you had Television, dear."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Russian Reality

It is safe to assert that the Russian Revolution has resulted in few better books than *Survival* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 12/6). Mr. D. FEDOTOFF WHITE is a realist in grain, handles nothing of which he has not immediate knowledge, and, considering his experiences, writes with an extraordinary freedom from political bias or personal bitterness. If he sometimes displays a rather sardonic humour, that is innate, not accidental. An officer in the Imperial Navy, he was at Reval in command of a destroyer when the storm broke; and, being a good sailor before all else, he was much more concerned for its effect on the efficiency of his service than for the fate of his Czar. His simple political faith being that "whate'er is best administered is best," he was prepared to welcome the Provisional Government so long as it got on with the one important business in hand, which was to fight the Germans. The abandonment of that business determined his future. He fought under the flag of KOLTCHAK, was imprisoned by the Cheka, was a civil servant in Bolshevik Moscow; and he bids us (one hopes a temporary) good-bye as he slips across the Finnish frontier into hazardous freedom. His narrative is fascinating, told with a wealth of vivid and significant detail, presented with the economy of a saga. His sufferings must have been great, but he makes no capital out of them. He neither blackens his enemies nor whitens his friends. His judgments have the charity of one without illusions.

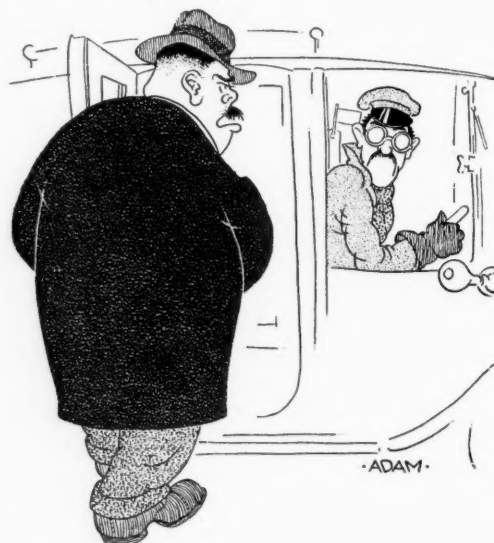
"Yours, Theodore"

In 1844 THEODORE FONTANE—ex-N.C.O. of the Kaiser Franz Guard and married—sailed from Cuxhaven to the Tower in search of a literary or tutorial job. A contemporary portrait shows a beau of two-and-thirty with a stock, side-whiskers and a Byronic complement of hair and eyelash. The poetic bent is further indicated, though hardly substantiated, in an entertaining batch of diaries, letters and articles vivaciously translated by Miss DOROTHY HARRISON.

They close in 1859 and show an increasing perception of the national character. The English poor, FONTANE decides, are better off than their German equivalents because they are free to grumble. The whole race ("grudgingly I must admit it") is nobler. But statesmen make nothing of this magnificent material; the Press is corrupted by party interests; and increasing governmental interference, however benevolent, spells death to the freedom of a democracy too easy-going to resist encroachments. *Journeys to England* (MASSIE, 8/6) includes a fine picture of Manchester as a grey Venice with barges for gondolas, a pathetic vignette of half-starved children with home-made shuttles in St. Giles, a luxurious interior at Brixton, and a somewhat disillusioned series of sketches in the Highlands.

The Tragic Tragedian

Mr. GILES PLAYFAIR has made a most readable story of *Kean* (BLES, 12/6). That perhaps is not difficult, as no stranger or more deeply tried character and no more fiery and incalculable genius ever walked the English stage. The author gives impressive proofs of a sedulous research which reflects great credit on so young an historian; and of his conscientious attempt to get under the skin of his subject. In the interests of brightness, indeed, he assumes a knowledge of mood and motive which could only be at the command of an intimate contemporary. He candidly paints in his hero's warts, but when it comes to interpretation of motive in personal relations he is frankly partisan. Well, if SHERIDAN KNOWLES could say, "Poor, Great Edmund Kean, that noble, enthusiastic, fine little fellow!" and BYRON, "By God, he is a Soul!" perhaps there he would claim substantial justification. And certainly if KEAN was vain, vindictive, arrogant, dissolute, unscrupulous in tactics, recklessly extravagant and morbidly touchy, he had so handicapping an inheritance and so arduous a struggle that all can be forgiven him. The contemporary scene is well presented and includes a horrifying impression of the cruelty of early-nineteenth-century audiences.



"Royal School of Needlework—and drive like mad."



Dealer. "THERE! I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO FIND A FAULT WITH HIM!"

Customer. "BUT HE'S GOT SUCH A BEASTLY TAIL!"

Dealer. "BEASTLY TAIL! THERE NEVER WAS A BAD RAT-TAILED OSS. WHY WE GO MILES TO FIND 'EM!"

John Leech, July 3rd, 1858

Blots on the Landscape

A mean sensual man—and the classic mistranslation is hardly unfair to *Mr. George Bowling*, insurance inspector—is led by a chance association of ideas to revisit, first in the spirit and later in the flesh, the home and haunts of his childhood, which lie in and about the little Oxfordshire town of Lower Binfield. That, in brief, is the argument of *Coming Up For Air* (GOLLANCZ, 7/6); but its essential theme is the degeneration since the War of the amenities of English life, and the remembered and present experiences of the autobiographical *George* are but illustrations of this. But if Mr. GEORGE ORWELL is savage in indictment and gloomy in prognostication, these experiences of his chosen mouthpiece may be followed for their own sake with unalloyed enjoyment; for they are set forth with uncommon vigour and actuality. Particularly delightful is the recaptured rapture of a small boy's fishing—the very soul of a carefree country life is there presented. Indeed it is a

little difficult to believe that so self-admittedly vulgar and tough a fellow as *Bowling* could be so delicate in apprehension or so evocative in description; just as it is impossible not to reflect that the translation of the ancient peace of Lower Binfield into a howling and jerry-built wilderness is largely the result of the ideals which he and his kind have pursued. But of Mr. ORWELL's own intellectual integrity and literary excellence there can be no question.

Journalists in Person

Pity the poor journalist—that is to say the journalist proper, not the young gentleman who, over his own signature and under his own repeated portrait, is suffered to register personality in a daily or weekly spate of tittle-tattle or uplift—for his work is hard, very possibly hazardous and, if not exactly mute, without glory. If he wants that or notoriety (which for practical purposes will serve just as well) he must do something other than

journalise—write books, enter Parliament, broadcast. Of the twelve journalists whom, in *Foreign Correspondent* (HARRAP, 10/6), Mr. WILFRED HINDLE has allowed or induced to speak for themselves and get the credit for it, some have done one or other of those things, the rest have not, but all are good men at their job (which the title of the book explains), employees of famous newspapers or news agencies. What they are here out to do is not so much to give us news as to tell us how they get it; and very good reading that makes. But of necessity they at the same time furnish quite a lot of interesting and lively information about the less comfortable countries, from China to Spain. If choice had to be made among a dozen excellent pieces of writing, the prizes would perhaps go to Mr. ION MUNRO's account of the awful experience of interviewing the DUCE, Mr. ALEXANDER HENDERSON's bitter picture of September in Prague, and Sir ALFRED WATSON's unimpassioned record of the violence which he suffered in Calcutta.

Unvarnished Tale

Some autobiographers succeed because of the story they tell, some because of the distinguished people they describe, a third type because they paint a full-length portrait of their author. Miss EDITH PICTON-TURBIVILL seems to have tried to write an autobiography of the first kind in *Life is Good* (MULLER, 12/6), but actually has achieved an excellent example of the third. Her life has been eventful enough and she has stirring things to tell of two ancestors, the General PICTON who fell at Waterloo, and a Scottish great-grandmother snatched from the tumbrils in the French Revolution, but it is the portrait of herself which is the real interest of her honest, level-headed, unaffected book. A twin in a family which boasted three pairs, daughter of a wealthy Welsh landowner of ancient family, she became first a Christian preaching to navvies in their huts, and later also a Member of Parliament, and a Labour Member at that. Of her work as a missionary in India, in Parliament and elsewhere she tells a round unvarnished tale which proves that she has made good use of the opportunities conceded to women in her day.

Route to Harley Street

The leading figure in Mr. GEORGE BORODIN's *Street of a Thousand Mistresses* (FABER AND FABER, 7/6) is a Russian who, having qualified as a surgeon in Rome, goes to Germany. Here his abilities are recognised to be so remarkable that he is allowed to take a degree which is open to foreigners only in exceptional circumstances. Then he comes to England and in the face of all sorts of professional etiquette, for which he overcomes his contempt, finally establishes himself in Harley Street. There seems to be among novel-

readers a widespread interest in the practice of medicine and surgery and in the details of hospital management, so that this story, with its mild sentimental appeal, should find many supporters. Others, however, will not find it easy to believe in a young man who is so invariably right in puzzling diagnoses and so miraculously skilful in operations in which there is about one chance in a thousand. It can hardly be luck, though that is not altogether absent from his love-affairs.

Quest

Three men took part in the long journey, "somewhere near the Arctic circle," which Mr. J. M. SCOTT conducts with an admirable combination of gusto and restraint in *Unknown River* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 7/6). The eldest of this trio was so obsessed by a craving for revenge that he was far from normal, while the youngest was a pleasant enough companion who was looking for romance and (conceivably) riches. But the third and most interesting of the party was a young man whose Scottish father had married an Indian squaw, and as guide to this expedition he proved his worth time and again. "He grew," Mr. SCOTT says, "with the Indian's grace of movement and the intelligent Scotsman's way of thought, which can make anybody feel a fool." Searchers after a bracing tale of adventure, in which attention is paid to characterisation, will find it in this well-told yarn.

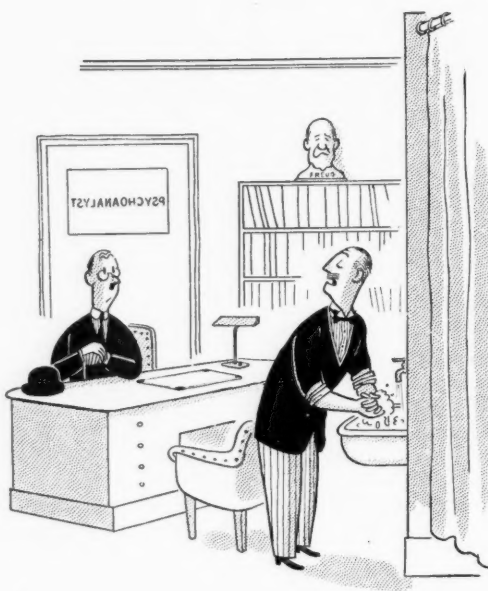
Banbury's Cross

Banbury Bog (COLLINS, 7/6) is another "*Asey Mayo* mystery," in which Miss PHOEBE ATWOOD TAYLOR's attractive investigator, though still active and energetic, seems when compared with some of his previous efforts to be almost

static. His job, and it could not be numbered among the easy ones, was to find the criminal who was paying murderous attentions to *Phineas Banbury*. American fiction is never likely to produce a heartier and more good-natured man than *Phineas*, but in putting a derelict town on the map he unwittingly aroused most vicious jealousy. *Asey*, however, was at hand to prevent this public benefactor from being unduly punished, and Miss TAYLOR handles an intricate case with so much ease and assurance that she establishes herself firmly among the best detective story-tellers of to-day.

Wong

MADAM, you err. I did not say just now
I loved the wailing of those jazz-band stars.
I will admit I called their turn "a wow,"
But that's because I can't pronounce my R's.



"I'm afraid we'll have to take that phobia right out of the subconscious, Mr. Wainwright."



Dialogue in a Doorway

"I SEE," said the Young Painter, "that Signor Mussol——"

Mr. Punch interrupted. "I did not make room for you in this doorway because of any wish to talk about politics. Show some originality or take your umbrella and go, Sir."

The Young Painter said he had no umbrella, and Mr. Punch said he knew that very well. "I do not propose to lend you mine," he added grimly.

"As a matter of fact," the Young Painter said, "I wasn't going to talk politics anyway. I was just going to say that I see old Musso has inspected an art exhibition of seventy-nine paintings all depicting one idea—crowds listening to one of his radio speeches."

"You would have come round to politics eventually. Everyone does," said Mr. Punch. "At no previous period in my recollection—and I may remind you, Sir, that ten years hence I shall have been for eight years a centenarian—have all conversations about no matter what tended so inexorably to come round to . . . where was I?"

"I know what you mean," said the Young Painter. "Well, but it's natural, isn't it? You can't talk about anything without talking about politics because politics is *in* everything, now. Look at this so-called *art* exhibition. Why——"

At this point a tall man approached the doorway hopefully and Mr. Punch grudgingly made room for him to come inside. He at once placed a paper against the wall and began to write.

"My guess," said the Young Painter, looking at him angrily, "is that this is a Member of the Fifth Column engaged in drafting a letter to *The Times*. He is suggesting that appeasement will solve the Tientsin problem: all the British have to do is to take off all their clothes with inflexible firmness before the Japs can do it for them. This will show our willingness to consider the legitimate problems of the Japanese authorities and . . . but the whole show makes me sick. Bah!"

"I deprecate a defeatist attitude in the young," said Mr. Punch with a side-glance at the tall man, who was still writing, "and your pessimism distresses me. He may not be a Member of the Fifth Column, he may not be writing to *The Times*, and even if he is he may be dealing with some totally unpolitical subject, such as crayfish in the Windrush, or walled-up nuns. Or freak foxgloves."

"Unpolitical my foot!" said the Young Painter. "You admitted yourself that everything came round to politics these days. He may be writing to cancel his subscription because he's just noticed they've begun to print a crossword puzzle, but something about the political situation will break in——"

The tall man abstractedly turned round and said, "Can either of you gentlemen tell me the best way of spelling 'Syntax'?"

"There you are," said Mr. Punch to the Young Painter: "something about words. Everybody's pet subject." But the Young Painter was still suspicious.

"Are you a supporter of appeasement?" he asked the tall man.

"Me? No," the tall man said. "I'm a supporter of Dr. Syntax in the four o'clock at Gosforth, and I want to get the name right. Some of these bookies are that tricky you wouldn't believe."

Mr. Punch kindly told him how to spell "Syntax" and he wrote it down, said "Much obliged," and went out eagerly into the rain, jingling some coins in his pocket.

"There goes your Member of the Fifth Column," said Mr. Punch to the Young Painter, who replied: "Oh, well," and thought for a moment. Then he said, "That doesn't prove anything. We didn't talk to him long enough. He would have begun to air views."

"Do I understand you to object to the airing of views?"

"Goebbels forbid!" said the Young Painter. "I don't object to it, it's just a trend we should all weigh. Particularly you. You're used to weighing trends."

Mr. Punch looked a little complacent. "I have weighed hundreds in my time," he admitted. "Not all, I suppose, correctly."

"You weren't so hot about Art, fifty years ago," said the Young Painter. "But anyway it's no use weighing trends nowadays, when you can't count on so much as to-morrow. . . . Even Musso can't count on to-morrow. As for the seventy-nine artists who did those seventy-nine awful pictures—why, if you count a picture's normal expectation of life as—"

"You have no excuse," Mr. Punch interrupted, "for assuming that the pictures are all awful. You allow your political prejudices to influence your taste."

"That's a trend," said the Young Painter. "Everyone does, nowadays. You, with your facile optimism—"

Mr. Punch said firmly, "Optimism does no harm. If things turn out well it has saved you a great deal of worry, and if things turn out badly it has *still* saved you a great deal of worry. Optimism, I venture to point out, is clear profit either way."

The Young Painter shook his head. "I'm constitutionally unfitted for it," he said. "The best I can do these days is fatalism. . . . Well, I must be pushing off. See you at the collapse of civilisation."

He stuck his head out into the rain and pulled it back again.

"By the way," he added, "I wouldn't want to do you out of your umbrella, but have you an old newspaper or something I could use—?"

"Take this," said Mr. Punch. "And you may find it cheering to glance into when you get home. It is of course my

One Hundred and Ninety-Sixth Volume"



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